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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

ENGLISH

THE [^]BALLAD

ITS EFFECT UPON NINETEENTH CENTURY POETRY

By

Catherine Elisabeth Giles

(B.S., Boston University, 1930)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

1934

482

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ENGLISH
THE BALLAD

Its Effect Upon Nineteenth Century Poetry

Outline

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V Classification
A Subject Matter
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2. Domestic tragedies
3. Courtships
4. Superstition and supernatural
5. Border ballads
6. Robin Hood ballads

B Style
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(a) stock phrase
(b) plot
(c) dramatical
4. Vividness
5. Directness
6. Definiteness

From earliest times, in the history of English literature, poetry has held a prominent place. The ballad, one of the earliest forms of poetry, still holds an important place in the literature of all ages. (1) It is the purpose of this thesis:

- (a) **PART I** Definition to the unconscious beauty and unnumbered variety of this single and direct form of poetry;
- (b) To catalogue the outstanding reasons for its continued life and universal appeal; and
- (c) To analyze the success and failure of nineteenth century poets of England who fell under the spell of the ancient ballad and attempted to reproduce in modern dress the striking simplicity of this type of narrative verse.

To avoid any confusion of terms I quote Professor Kittredge's (2) definition. "A ballad is a song that tells a story, or - to take the other point of view - a story told in song. More formally, it may be defined as a

(1) Kittredge - English and Scottish Ballads - page XIV

Professor Kittredge states - "There is no difficulty in proving beyond a reasonable doubt that there were ballads in plenty from the dawn of English history (not to speak of what lies before this epoch) down to the seventeenth century, when written and printed documents began to abound."

(2) English and Scottish Ballads - page XI

PART I

From earliest times, in the history of English literature, poetry has held a preeminent place. The ballad, one of the earliest forms of poetry, still holds an inimitable place in the literature of all ages. (1) It is the purpose of this thesis:

- (a) To call attention to the unconscious beauty and untutored artistry of this simple and direct form of poetry;
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short narrative poem, adapted for singing, simple in plot and metrical structure, divided into stanzas, and characterized by complete impersonality so far as the author or singer is concerned."

The word "ballad" is itself one of the loosest terms in literary nomenclature. It has been used to designate several distinct genera of poetry, and at no time in the history of literature can it be said to have any precise meaning. It includes ballads both ancient and modern, classical and literary, popular, traditional and even the stall or street ballad.

Professor Gummere (1) says, "The main source of error lies in the application of the word however spelled, to almost any short narrative poem, to any short didactic poem, to almost any sort of lyric, and to almost every conceivable form of reviling or grumbling in verse. No better proof of this confusion can be found than in the Register of the company of Stationers in London. Now and then we meet the traditional ballad of the people: 'a ballett of Wakefylde and agrene' (1557-58), is followed by 'a ballett of admonyssion to leave swerynge' and 'a ballett called have pytie on the poore' (1559.) John Alde pays his fee for 'pryntinge a balett of Robyn Hood (1562-3); but com-

(1) Old English Ballads XIX

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pare this batch of seven 'ballettes': Godly Immes used in the churches; Who are so mery as they of ye low estate; The proverbe is tru yot weddynges ys Destynes; The Robbery at Gaddes Hill; Holdeth ancer fast; Be mery, good Jane; The panges of Love. Moral parodies of a popular song, hymns, satire and personal attack, rimes about a duke's funeral or a campaign in Scotland, or any nine days' wonder, - all these with an occasional ballad of tradition, are entered in the registers under the convenient name."

To avoid confusion, the definition of Professor Kittredge, previously quoted, will be the accepted criterion, and the ballads found in the collection of Professor Child (1) will be the basis and the type of ballad chosen for consideration.

The ancient English ballad was the song of the people, an unlettered folk living a simple, primitive, homogeneous community life. Their interests all centered around the same thing. There were no classes of society nor intellectual divisions. They all enjoyed the same diversions and delighted in singing and dancing around the camp fires. Therefore, there is nothing of the liter-

(1) English and Scottish Popular Ballads published in ten parts, 5 Volumes 1882-1898 by Francis James Child

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in the churches; who are so many as they of ye low estate;
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at Bachel's Bill; 'Maiden's song; 56 Mary, Good Jane;
The songs of love. Moral parodies of a popular song,
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ary or classical style of the more learned poets in these folk songs. They were made for singing or chanting, and the ear rather than the eye must be pleased.

They must not be confused with the French Ballade which has an elaborate and intricate pattern, as well established as the sonnet. In structure and pattern the ballade is extremely strict. It is made up (1) of three eight line stanzas and the envoy or refrain. It is the product of the learned, and forms a direct contrast with the crude simplicity of the old ballads. Because of the confusion and perhaps because of carelessness in spelling, the two words ballad and ballade may seem to bear some relation, but in composition, style and characteristics, they are so vastly different that one has no significant relation to the other. True, the ballade was the forerunner of the English classical or literary ballad, but here again this conscious form of literary art bears no relation to the ancient ballad or song of the people. Both words, undoubtedly, spring from the word "baller" (2) to dance - and beyond a doubt the ancient ballad was first used as a chant in which the community as a whole joined, either to repeat the refrain or to sing or chant the entire

(1) Untermeyer - The Forms of Poetry - page 44

(2) Legours & Cazamian 1929 - History of English Lit. -
Page 179

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(1) Untermyer - The Forms of Poetry - page 44
 (2) LeGosse - Cassanian 1929 - History of English Lit. - Page 179

story. The pantomime, or suitable gestures which were introduced to make the story more emphatic, more dramatic, soon took on the rhythm of the dance, and the two became inseparable.

Gummere tells us that we may assume (1) that the ballad had its origin in the choral song, combined with the festal dance, but he points out that the "charole" which was sung by the more learned class as they engaged in the dance was not narrative in form but was rather the French ballade quite different from the ancient ballad.

The term "popular ballad" is also confusing. "Popular ballad" is the term applied to the ancient ballads of traditional origin which appear in Professor Child's collection, but the term "popular" has no connection with the popular or modern street ballad that claimed the attention of the English people long after the ancient ballad had been replaced by more learned forms of poetry. These ballads correspond to the chap books sold by peddlers and were often the product of some Grub street writer. Barring the name, there is no possible ground for confusing the two, because by point of time they are separated by centuries, and in style and content the two are as widely differentiated.

(1) Gummere - The Popular Ballad - page 460

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The popular street ballad often printed as a broadside, a single sheet of printer's art, makes no claim to literary merit. It was popular because it dealt with news of the day or hour in verse form, and could be purchased at any street corner for a penny.

The "popular ballad" appearing in the collections of Percy and Child is popular, but not because it was well liked by the people. It bears the name "popular" because it was the song of the people, because it came from a simple people and repeated, as if in echo, their loves and hates, their tragedies and joys, and the whole was given to them in direct narrative verse well suited to their understanding.

The ballad then became a definite part of the community life of an unlettered people.

It is a well-known fact, cited by several authorities that when learning is brought to an unlettered community, it completely drives out the forms of primitive literature, art, or amusement, and the folk quickly adopts the more learned forms. (1)

No authority claims to be able to state definitely the age of the ancient ballad literature. We know that they existed in primitive England as well as all

(1) Gummere - Old English Ballads - page XXVII (introduction)

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(1) Gummere - Old English Ballads - page XXVII (introduction)

over Europe before the invasion of the Normans. (1) We know that whenever and wherever heroic deeds were done, the people found some means of celebrating them in song and handing them down by word of mouth from generation to generation. "It is impossible," writes Kittredge, (2) "from the nature of the case, to cite documentary evidence for every step in the history of the ballads of a given people."

We know that with the Conquest of the Normans came a new language and a new cycle of folk lore and the old ballads disappeared. They reappear some two centuries later, preserved by the traditions of the homogeneous folk, the unlettered and untaught community whose social status allowed them to cling to the traditional literature of their fathers long after it had been cast aside by the more cultured classes.

The ballad has, or appears to have, no author. In the definition quoted "complete impersonality" was a characteristic of the ballad. Whoever recited a ballad was as much the author as the person or persons who first shaped the story. (3)

"A legend," Amy Lowell tells us, "is something which nobody has written, and everybody has written, and

(1) Kittredge - English & Scottish Popular Ballads XIV

(2) Kittredge - English & Scottish Popular Ballads XIII

(3) Legours & Cazamian - A History of English Literature -
page 180

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- (1) Kittredge - English & Scottish Popular Ballads XIV
 - (2) Kittredge - English & Scottish Popular Ballads XIII
 - (3) Roberts & Gosselin - A History of English Literature - page 160

which everybody is at liberty to rewrite." This is true of the ballad as well as the legend, and it is due to the same circumstances that the ballad comes to us without an author. It does not belong to that class of poetry from which the author's name has been either lost or intentionally omitted or withheld, but it is anonymous, because it comes to us from an age when neither the people nor the poet could write. The ballad maker sang his tales to an audience who could not read. He belonged to a community where everyone from the king to the meanest, poorest subject depended upon the spoken word to inform or to entertain him. Anything that fell into simple rhyme, and lent itself easily to the memory, was popular.

The story of a fierce battle bravely fought with all the harrowing details told or chanted in verse was sure to hold the attention and claim the favor of the people. He who was most gifted in telling his tales became the popular entertainer or minstrel, although he may not have been the first to relay the news of the battle, or the first to relate it in ballad form. Every minstrel who repeated the tale of an heroic deed, or favorite warrior, or a feud between tribes, clans or camps, a tragedy of love or a gruesome murder, felt that he had the privilege of altering the tale to suit either his hearers or his own memory. He then became the author of a part of the ballad and

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had as much right to be called the author as the first to set the tale in motion.

Jacob Grimm and several other authorities advance this theory of communal origin and authorship. Steintol, advocating the theory, maintains that the individual is the outcome of culture and long ages of development, while primitive races show simply an aggregate of men. Sensation, impulse, and sentiment must be quite uniform in an uncivilized community -- what one feels, all feel. "A common creative sentiment," he declares, "throws out the word and makes language, throws out the song and makes poetry."

Montaigne, a French essayist, pointed out the fact that ballads were the poetry of the people ages before books were written. Gummere, Child and Kittredge hold this same theory, but John Buchan (1) and Louise Pound (2) hold other theories.

Buchan contends that the Minstrel is responsible for the ballad. He declares that "Ballads in their existing form belong to a comparatively late age, and were the work of popular minstrels who were the successors of the old skalds and gleemen and worked on a literary tradition which represented the breakdown of the elder tradition of the romance or fabliau when they were not composing lays

(1) John Buchan - A History of English Literature - page 39

(2) Louise Pound - Poetic Origin of the Ballad - page 95

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(1) John Graham - A History of English Literature - page 39

(2) Louise Pound - Poetic Origin of the Ballad - page 25

like the Chanson de geste called forth by contemporary event."

This is the theory that he believes most reasonable. To quote him again:

"Art does not come into being from popular excitement, but from the inspiration of a particular gifted individual. It cannot be syndicated and socialized. The doctrine of the extreme antiquity of the original minstrel seems to be contradicted by facts before us. Besides the bards maintained by the feudal lords there was also a tradition of a rude popular minstrelsy which contained elements reading back to the beliefs far older than Christianity. As the romantic tradition of the fabliaux died away its remnant took popular shape in county tales and out of this material the ballads were made by men whose identity has not been preserved. The probability is that most of the ballads were fashioned in the 16th century by minstrels who summed up a long ancestry of popular poetry, as in Burns, culminated a long tradition of Scottish vernacular songs." (1)

The bard or minstrel theory of authorship has much to recommend it. The minstrel was indeed an important personage. Several of the most important of these singers have left their names and their fame written on the page of history. We have one epitaph which runs:

"Here lyeth, under this marbyll ston

Rich Alane, the ballid man." (2)

(1) John Buchan - A History of English Literature - page) 40)

(2) Motherwell - Introduction

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-tant personage. Several of the most important of these
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the page of history. We have one epitaph which runs:

"Here lyeth, under this martyr's stone

Rich Alan, the ballad man." (2)

(1) John Buchan - A History of English Literature - page
40

(2) Motherwell - Introduction

We have records which show that the minstrel had connection with castle and convent and had therefore all the advantages of the day, namely the wealth of the aristocracy and the learning of the convent; still authorities claim that the ballad is not the work of the minstrel. Internal evidence shows that the ballad is far superior to the known work of any of the minstrels whose names appear in any age. External evidence points out the fact that the profession of minstrel had deteriorated and they despised the simple songs that the people sang at their dances and gatherings. (1)

In 1543 an act was passed "for the advancement of true religion, and for the abolishment of the contrary" in which it was stated that "forward and malicious minds, intending to subvert the true exposition of the scriptures, have taken upon them by printed ballads, rhymes, etc., subtilly and craftily to instruct his highness' people, and specially the youth of this, his realm, untruly. For reformation wherefore, his majesty considereth it most requisite to purge his realm of all such books, ballads, rhymes and songs as be pestiferous and noiseone."

No greater proof is needed than this to establish the fact that the minstrel had nothing to do with the creation and very little with the preservation of the songs

(1) Gummere - Popular Ballads - page 13

(2) Louisa Fossel - Poetic Origins and the Ballad - pages 282

We have records which show that the minstrel had connection with castle and convent and had therefore all the advantages of the day, namely the wealth of the aristocracy and the learning of the convent; still authorities claim that the ballad is not the work of the minstrel. Internal evidence shows that the ballad is far superior to the known work of any of the minstrels whose names appear in any age. External evidence points out the fact that the profession of minstrel had deteriorated and they despised the simple songs that the people sang at their dances and gatherings. (1)

In 1545 an act was passed "for the advancement of true religion, and for the abolishment of the contrary" in which it was stated that "forward and malicious minds, intending to subvert the true exposition of the scriptures, have taken upon them by printed ballads, rymes, etc., and slyly and craftily to instruct his highness' people, and especially the youth of this his realm, contrary to his majesty's commandment, his majesty's consideration it most readylye to purge his realm of all such books, ballads, rymes, and songs as be peevish, and noisome."

No greater proof is needed than this to establish the fact that the minstrel had nothing to do with the creation and very little with the preservation of the songs

of the people. Somewhere they were created, somewhere they were cherished but not in the collection of the minstrels of any age or country.

Some authorities claim that internal evidence alone refutes the minstrel authorship theory. They also contend that no community, no group of people, no matter how homogeneous, how isolated, how insular, could produce the unity of structure, the simplicity and force of narration and the spontaneity of the old ballad.

This is the stand taken by Louise Pound in her book, "Poetic Origins and the Ballad." She states that any ballad composed by the so-called "communal" method is necessarily led by an individual and she draws the inference that "the individual does everything he can do, as an individual, before or contemporary with, his ability to do the same thing as a member of a throng." (1) She feels that Professor Gummere is asking the student to bridge too wide a gap when he draws a comparison between aboriginal song and dance and the English and Scottish ballads of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. (2)

Miss Pound is a strong advocate of the theory of individual authorship. She allows no other theory than that of individual creation because she classes the ballads as "perfect pieces of art not to be improved in cohesion,

(1) Louise Pound - Poetic origins and the Ballad - page 11

(2) Louise Pound - Poetic origins and the Ballad - pages 8&9

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- (1) Louise Pound - Poetic Origins and the Ballad - page 11
(2) Louise Pound - Poetic Origins and the Ballad - pages 869

cumulative effect, economy of words, use of suspense and climax." (1)

This theory is given some cogitation by other ballad authorities, but discarded because it is not sufficiently broad to cover all ballad authorship. Most authorities include this theory as a possibility but not as the only accepted theory.

Not as an authority, but because the theory advanced by most scholars on the authorship of the ballad seems to lie somewhere between these two theories, let us go back to an age, the earliest age before people could either read or write. Their chief recreation would be the primitive song and dance. In the history of any savage or primitive people the song and the dance are the chief means of recreation. The native of Africa has his dance, and in the mountains of Italy improvised songs for the dance are common to-day.

At such a gathering the story of any of our traditional ballads might be told by a singer who had the gift of lending his words to the simple metre that we associate with the ballad, and which, through the ages has come to bear that name. He would in no sense be either a poet or a minstrel, but simply a member of the community who could

(1) Louise Pound - Poetic origins and the Ballad - page 115

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(1) James Froude - Poetic Origins and the Ballad - page 118

give a first hand account of a tragedy. When the singer paused the group or gathering might repeat the last line giving the song a refrain or a chorus. If the story sang itself, if it met with approval, doubtless many members of the gathering might try to repeat it.

At a later date if the individual tried to repeat his story, he might try to improve it, or he might add another incident or detail. In the days that followed, his song or rhymed story of the incident would be remembered and repeated. Constant repetition would smooth away any rough places, and the rhythm of the melody and the concert repetition would shape the song into a composition, simple but dignified, and reflecting the life of the people by whom it was shaped and the spark of individuality conveyed by the individual whose single brain planned and gave the song being.

The original incident however was not of his creation. It had come to him from the community. The finished product was not his; it had grown out of a gathering of his peers. In the community, in the gathering, certain phrases, certain idioms had been used before and found favor with the group. Naturally they would find a place in the song as it shaped itself. Therefore, it was not the individual alone who was responsible for the ballad, neither was it a communal composition entirely, but a combination of both. This is the most popular theory advanced by scholars to whom

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a communal composition entirely, but a combination of both.
This is the most general theory advanced by scholars to whom

the melody and charm of the ballad is ever a constant joy. (1)

The theory of the middle ground recognizes both the minstrel and the people and eliminates the haziness of certain theories. Given a community where every individual was a poet, or poetically or artistically inclined, the race would soon die out for want of practical folk to curb the artistic and poetic fancies of the singers. Moreover, no community, even though it were made up entirely of poets, could produce minstrels equally gifted. One would certainly surpass the others, would stand as a leader and be so recognized.

The theory of the middle ground has been accepted by Child and Kittredge in regard to the ballads which time and universal acceptance have termed popular. With this theory in mind, Professor Kittredge has carefully tested every ballad in his collection, and although Child and Percy gave him his source material, and although he accepts their theories as the foundation of ballad origin, he excludes many ballads that appeared in their collections because he believes they were not the combined work of the singer and the community.

In our definition of the ballad quoted from Professor Kittredge the most significant characteristic was the impersonal tone. It reflects nothing of the author's

(1) Gummere - "Old English Ballads" - Chapter IV of the Introduction for complete analysis of this theory

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feeling. He simply told the tale and left the rest to the listener. The subjects around which the old ballads are woven, make this possible. The old ballads fall easily into simple classes, or groups, which reflect the life and interests of people living together in clans or similar social groups. Professor Child (1) heads his list with Riddle Ballads, or contests of wit, and follows with domestic tragedies, coronachs, ballads dealing with the supernatural, Border Ballads and Ballads of life in the greenwood.

The first group is perhaps the oldest and least interesting. "Riddles Wisely Expounded" is an interesting example. In the oldest version (2), the devil threatens to carry off a maiden if she cannot answer three questions put to her in the form of riddles. She has an answer for all three and also names her interlocutor, thereby winning her freedom. There are several other ballads based on giving correct answers to curiously worded riddles, and rewards and penalties vary from the winning of a husband to loss of life.

The next subject treated by Child is the interesting and varied line of domestic tragedies. This is the theme upon which the greatest number of English and Scottish ballads are made. They include such interesting situations as the stolen bride, the exiled husband, the abandoned wife,

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the scheming mother, the cruelty of a mother, step-mother, father, or brothers and sisters, or any domestic situation or complication.

The third group deals with mourning for the dead. They are known as Coronachs and grief for the departed is the main burden of all these ballads. "Unfortunately," writes Professor Gummere, (1) "there is no ballad of the departing soul, only that very effective Lyke Dirge, (2) which is not a ballad at all, which was repeated or sung at country funerals, in the seventeenth century."

(1) The Popular Ballad - page 207

(2) A Lyke Dirge - included here for purposes of comparison

This ae night, this ae night,
Every night and alle;
Fire and sleet and candle light,
And Christ receive thy saule.
Thou

When from hence away art passed,
To Whinny-muir thou comest at last.

If ever thou gavest hosen and shoon,
Sit thee down and put them on;

If hosen and shoon thou ne'er gavest none,
The whinnes shall prick thee to the bare bone;

From whinny-muir when thou mayst pass,
To Brig O'Dread thou comest at last;

From Brig O'Dread when thou mayst pass
To Purgatory fire thou comest at last;

If ever thou gavest meat or drink
The fire shall never make thee shrink;

If meat or drink thou ne'er gavest none,
The fire will burn thee to the bare bone;

This ae night, this ae night,
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(1) The Popular Ballad - page 807

(2) A Lyke Dirge - included here for pur-
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This as night, this as night,
Every night and all;
Fire and alack and candle light,
And Christ receive thy soul.
Thou
When from hence away art passed,
To whinny-whin thou comest at last.
If ever thou gapest hosen and shoon,
Sit thee down and put thee on;
If hosen and shoon thou hast gapest none,
The whinnes shall prick thee to the bare bone;
From whinny-whin when thou wayst pass,
To Brig O'breed thou comest at last;
From Brig O'breed when thou wayst pass,
To Furgatory live thou comest at last;
If ever thou gapest meat or drink,
The fire shall never make thee shrink;
If meat or drink thou hast gapest none,
The fire will burn thee to the bare bone;
This as night, this as night,
Fire and alack and candle light.

It is patterned on the form of the ballad, and has many ballad characteristics, but it lacks any element of narrative, and must therefore be classed as a lyric.

In "THE RAVENS," and "SIR PATRICK SPENS," the mourners or the observers tell the story instead of the heroes, and the farewell comes, not from those left behind. YOUNG WATERS, and JONNIE ARMSTRONG both speak their own farewells, and it is from their own lips that we learn the circumstances that attend their departure from this world.

Closely related to the Coronachs are the ballads dealing with superstition and the return of the dead. There are fairy lovers like the ELF QUEEN, in "THOMAS RHYMER," and magic transformations such as take place in "KEMP OWEN." In "SWEET WILLIAM'S GHOST," the lover returns from the dead and demands "faith and throuthe" again. "THE DEAMON LOVER" shows a lover carrying off his former sweetheart, regardless of the fact that since his death, she has married. He brings her to a ship where -

"The sails were of the taffetie
And the masts o' the beaten gold"

The bride soon discovers her lover's cloven hoof, and learns, to her horror, that she must dwell in Hell.

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"THE HORRIBLE BALLAD," in which Scott found his chief interest, forms a most important group. They consist of chronicles told with some epic consistency, celebrating the

raids and battles of the borderland between England and Scotland. Closely related to them we find their English cousins, the "GREENWOOD BALLADS." Here we have entrancing outlaws for heroes, and Robin Hood, named by Wordsworth, "The English ballad singer's joy," the most entrancing of them all.

The subject matter of the ballad is traditional, but all poems of traditional origin are not ballads. The folk-song, the choral of labor, and the funeral dirge are traditional, but they lack the fundamental characteristics of the ballad. The simplicity of meter and diction, the vividness with which it etches each event, the clear, definite line of action by which the narrative moves, so directly from subject to object, striving for no effect, and having no thought but the spontaneous desire to tell a simple story to a simple receptive audience, place the ballad among the literary treasures of the world.

The simplicity of meter is well marked, for ballad versification is exceedingly simple. The standard foot is iambus, and stanza and rhyme are the main considerations. Ballad meter is not always smooth, because accent is more important than syllable. The ballad pleases the ear and was made to be sung or recited. A clever tongue can smooth the roughest verse by placing the accents where they belong, and completely ignoring or dropping unaccented syllables. Viewed on the printed pages of our books, or read silently, the often uneven measure gives the impression of

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doggerel. The author of the ballad had no way of placing his completed stanzas on paper and calling upon the eye to aid the ear. His appeal was auditory alone, and he had to depend upon his memory, and the memories of his listeners to enable him to repeat his ballad once it had been created. No doubt the verse was changed somewhat and perhaps some of the rougher places made smooth by many repetitions of various gatherings for, once a ballad was launched, its simple stanzas became the song of the folk.

The stanza of the ballad may consist of two, four, or six lines, or verses. The thought is completed with the line, no matter what the length of the stanza may be. The oldest ballad stanzas sometimes consist of two lines, each rhyming as in "THE TWA SISTERS:"

"He courted the eldest wi' glove and ring,
But he loved the youngest above a' thing."

There are a few ballads patterned on the six line stanza, but they prove to be, when analyzed, four line stanzas with the addition of a two line refrain, or a two line stanza with a refrain added and then repeated.

The conventional ballad meter usually consists of four line stanzas; the first and third lines having four accents, and the second and fourth, three. The rhyming scheme is: -a-b-c-b, the rhymed syllables falling at the ends of the second and fourth lines. Almost any ballad might be used to illustrate, but the following lines are

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quoted from "THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY:"

"'Rise up, rise up, now Lord Douglas', she says,
And put on your armor so bright;
Let it never be said that a daughter of thine,
Was married to a lord under night!'"

Occasionally in the four line stanza, the rhyming scheme falls a-b-a-b-, the first and third line rhyming as well as the second and fourth, as:

"When he had eaten and drunk his fill,
'Lay down your head upon my knee'
The lady sayd, 'ere we climb yon hill,
And I will show you fairlies three.'"

A frequently used device was to make line two rhyme with line four by repeating the same word. This is called "identical rhyme." In "THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL," the seventh stanza makes use of this device:

"Blow up the fire my maiden,
Bring water from the well;
For a'my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well."

In some cases rhyme is altogether lacking as in this stanza from "HIND HORN:"

"Will ye lend me your begging coat?
And I'll lend you my scarlet cloak."

There are several other stanzas in this same ballad which are without rhyme. Stanza eight uses the word HORN, and makes it rhyme with MAN; while stanza fourteen uses MILL and HALL.

Assonance in the first instance in CLOAK and COAT is supposed to fill the need, and the double "l" in HALL and MILL answers the same purpose, but in the case of HORN and MAN a single letter suffices. Ballad versification has

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This is undoubtedly true of the diction of the ballad also. The ballad is a form of poetry almost bare of ornament. Simple and direct, the words are those of the everyday speech of the people who sang them, and to whom they were sung. Each line is generally a clause, and the sentence pause comes in the middle of the stanza, or at the end of the fourth line. If there are two sentences the pauses will invariably fall at the end of the second and fourth lines.

There is no conscious attempt to embellish the diction of the ballad, but unconsciously, set, or stock phrases, in which alliteration occurs, are used over and over again. Similes that are familiar, trite, everyday expressions find their way into the ballads. These are used, however, not through any conscious desire to decorate or to ornament, but are employed in the most matter-of-fact way, because they were a part of the vernacular of the folk.

A wife, a friend, a lover, a horse or a blade may be "trusty and trewe," while any or all may cover both "dale and down." "Busk and boun," "kith and kin," as well as "cheek and chin," recur again and again, but they seem a part of the unconscious artistry of the ballad. The same is true of the few similes. Steeds canter "like the wind," warriors "fly like fire about." Epithets, like the laws of the

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A wife, a friend, a lover, a house or a blade
may be "fussy and trewe," while any or all may cover both
"dale and down," "rush and bow," "kith and kin," as well as
"chuck and chin," occur again and again, but they seem a part
of the unconscious elasticity of the ballad. The same is true
of the few similes. "Stood center" like the wind, "war-
riors" fly like the wind, "withers like the leaves of the

Medes and Persians, never change. Brides are always "bonny," ladies always "fair," and hands are always "milk-white."

Over and over again, the same stock phrase is used, but no one thought to criticize the author. In fact his public liked their ballads phrased in familiar ways because they were more easily memorized, and an audience could fall into the swing and follow the leader, for once started, they knew as well as he the diction, the meter, and perhaps the plot.

The plot of course varied some times according to the author, but it was often the fashion among ballad makers to keep the same plot, the same situations, and the same kind of characters. The same questions were asked, the same answers made, the same messages delivered over and over again. (1) Mothers, in ballad lore, were repeatedly called upon to make beds either "soft and narrow," or "braid and wide," while their fair daughters seemed everlastingly engaged in sewing a fine seam.

Over and over, word, phrase, and plot are repeated, but never for an instant spoiling the simplicity, the naturalness, and the vitality of the ballad. This repetition has, moreover, a definite part to play in the movement of the action of the ballad, for the progression sometimes depends upon incremental repetition - a constant repetition

23
Nedra and Nedra, never change. Brides are always "Nedra,"

Ladies always "fair," and hands are always "alike-white."

Over and over again, the same stock phrase is

used, but no one thought to criticize the author. In fact
his public liked their ballads phrased in familiar ways be-
cause they were more easily memorized, and an audience could
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with a constant addition, a "leaping and a lingering," (1) as Professor Gummere points out, and yet a steady advance to the climax of the narrative.

An excellent example of incremental repetition, and one that runs closely to type is found in "THE MAID FREED FROM THE GALLOWS." This ballad has five distinct parts. The first stanza in each part contains the maid's request to the judge; the next to her father, and the third, his reply:

"Oh good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord Judge
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own father,
Come riding by the stile.

Oh father, of father, a little of your gold,
And likewise of your fee!
To keep my body from yonder grave
And my neck from the gallows-tree.

None of my gold now you shall have,
Nor likewise of my fee
For I am come to see you hanged,
And hanged you shall be."

These three stanzas are repeated five times with the substitution of relatives including a mother, a brother and a sister. The rhythm is the same as that of the popular "Yo-Yo" top which slides or unwinds on a string but the momentum of the unwinding winds it up again. At last the maid's true love approaches and the climax changes the negative to the positive and the substitution of the word "saved" for "hanged:"

with a constant addition, a "leaping and a lingering," (1) as Professor Gurneys points out, and yet a steady advance to the climax of the narrative.

An excellent example of incremental repetition, and one that runs closely to type is found in "THE MAID BEYOND FROM THE GILLOWS." This ballad has five distinct parts. The first stanza in each part contains the maid's request to the Judge; the next to her father, and the third, his reply:

"Oh good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord Judge
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own father,
Come riding by the stile.
Oh father, of father, a little of your gold,
And likewise of your fee!
To keep my body from yonder grave
And my neck from the gillows-tree.

None of my gold now you shall have,
Nor likewise of my fee
For I am come to see you hanged,
And hanged you shall be."

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"hanged:"

"Oh good Lord Judge, and sweet Lord Judge,
Peace for a little while!
Methinks I see my own true-love
Come riding by the stile.

Oh true-love, oh true-love, a little of your
gold,

And likewise of your fee!
To save my body from yonder grave,
And my neck from the gallows-tree.

Some of my gold you now shall have,
And likewise of my fee
For I am come to see you saved
And saved you shall be."

The beauty of incremental repetition is that it gives an unexpected turn to the climax in an unexpected place. It also controls progression. Progression may be by line or stanza; in the majority of ballads it is by line. In "SIR HUGH," the increments are found within the lines:

"And first came out the thick, thick blood,
And syne came out the thin,
And syne came out the bonny heart's blood,
There was no mair within."

Incremental repetition seems to be the one infallible test of the true ballad. It is the mark of artless simplicity and directness, and gives the ballad one of its outstanding characteristics, that of objectivity.

To again quote Professor Kittredge, (1) "The ballad has no author." If there is no author, or if the author completely merges himself with his subject, then this must be the reason for the complete objectivity of the ballad.
(2)

(1) English and Scottish Ballads XI - Introduction

(2) Kittredge - English and Scottish Ballads - Introduction
page XXV

"Oh good Lord Jesus, and sweet Lord Jesus,
 Leave for a little while!
 Methinks I see my true-love
 Come riding by the stile."

Oh true-love, oh true-love, a little of your
 Gold,

And likewise of your love;
 To save my body from your grave,
 And my neck from the gallows-tree.

Some of my gold you now shall have,
 And likewise of my love;
 For I am come to see you saved
 And saved you shall be."

The beauty of incremental repetition is that it gives an un-
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 increments are found within the lines:

"And first came out the thick, thick blood,
 And then came out the thin,
 And then came out the bonny heart's blood,
 There was no pain within."

Incremental repetition seems to be the one infallible test
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- (1) English and Scottish Ballads XI - Introduction
 (2) Kibbidge - English and Scottish Ballads - Introduction
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No elaborate setting is given, it begins exactly where the action begins, and the reader, or the audience, must construct the desired background from the few meager facts that the action reveals.

Consider "SIR PATRICK SPENS." The entire story is told in eleven stanzas. We are told of the king, his court and the errand in four lines. In two lines Sir Patrick appears, and within the next four, he receives his "braid letter," and departs in his "guid schip," fearing the "deadlie storm." With the Scots ladies we mourn Sir Patrick, whom we have grown to love, although we have spent but ten stanzas in his company.

Sir Patrick Spens

The king sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blue-reid wine:
'O whar will I get guid sailor,
To sail this schip of mine.'

Up and spak an eldern knicht,
Sat at the kings richt kne:
'Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor
That sails upon the se.'

The king has written a briad letter
And signd it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red
The teir blinded his ee.

'O wha is this has don this deid,
This sill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
To sail upon the se!

No elaborate setting is given, it begins exactly where the action begins, and the reader, or the audience, must connect the desired background from the few meager facts that the action reveals.

Consider "Sir Patrick Spence". The entire story is told in eleven stanzas. It was told of the king, his court and the sword in four lines. In two lines Sir Patrick appears, and within the next four, he receives his "death letter," and departs in his "gilt ship," leaving the "deadly store." With the Scots ladies we mourn Sir Patrick, whom we have grown to love, although we have spent but ten stanzas in his company.

Sir Patrick Spence

The king sits in Dunfermline town,
Drinking the blue-bell wine;
'O what will I get gild sailor,
To sail this ship of mine.'

Up and again an eldren knight,
Set at the king's right knee;
'Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor
That sails upon the sea.'

The king has written a braid letter
And signed it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick read,
A loud laugh launched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick read,
The tear blinded his ee.

'O what is this has don this deed,
This ill deed don to me,
To send me out this time o' the year,
To sail upon the sea.'

'Mak hast, mak hast, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne:'
'O say na sae, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.

'Late late yestreen I saw the new moone,
Wi the auld moone in his arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
That we sill cum to harme.'

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith
To weet their cork-heild schoone;
Bot lang owre a' the play wer playd,
Their hats they swam aboone.

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into thair hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spence
Cum sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi thair gold kems in thair hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they'll se thame no mair.

Haf owre, haf owre to Aberdour,
It's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

Concreteness, conciseness, objectivity at its barest are found here, because the author had no theory, no "ism," to impose upon the reader, or audience, and no autobiographical material to preserve for posterity.

This is true of any ballad. One can always recognize the poetry of Burns, unerringly identify the lyrics of Tennyson, and differentiate between the treatment of the same subject by any two modern authors, but the author of the ballad leaves nothing by which he may be identified. Ballad poetry is entirely objective. The occurrence of the pronoun

My heart, my heart, my heart, my heart,
My heart, my heart, my heart, my heart,
My heart, my heart, my heart, my heart,
My heart, my heart, my heart, my heart.

Late late yesterday I saw the new moon,
Wi the wild moon in his arms,
And I felt, I felt, my dear master,
That we all can be happy.

O our Scots nobles were right laith
To see their corn-hill echoes;
Not lang owre a' the play was play,
Their hats they swam afloat.

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi their fans in their hand,
Or sit they as Sir Patrick Spence,
Gum sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi their gold kems in their hair,
Waiting for their ain dear lords,
For they'll see them no mair.

Half owre, half owre to Aberdeen,
It's little ladies help,
And their lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi the Scots lords at his feet.

Conciseness, conciseness, objectivity at its

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"I", in ballad literature is so rare, that its appearance in the one or two cases is surprising, although it is in keeping with the complete objectivity which marks the ballad.

The great difference between ballads and the more recent forms of verse, is the difference between subjectivity and objectivity. Professor Kittredge points out that the reason for this difference is found in the manner in which the two types of verse are composed. (1) The modern author enters his room, closes his door on the world, and alone with his thoughts and his subject, he writes what he thinks and feels. He has shut his audience out; away from him and his poetry. They have no part in it.

Contrast this method with the spontaneous composition of one among a throng of people who have just heard the news of a glorious victory. The messenger stands among them, and they are eager to hear his news. His words are greeted with cheers and an emotional display by those nearest, and repeated for the benefit of those on the outer edge of the crowd. Soon all have caught the message and it becomes a swinging, swaying, rhythmical chant. After a while the crowd is silent, for the messenger is again speaking. Perhaps he catches the rhythm of the crowd and phrases his message accordingly, or perhaps some one particularly gifted person standing near, picks up the words as they fall

(1) Kittredge - English and Scottish Ballads - Introduction
XXIV

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(1) Kittredge - English and Scottish Ballads - Introduction
XIV

from the lips of the messenger, and sings it to the excited throng, who are waiting to add it to the preceding stanza. This process is repeated until the entire story is told. The singer employs simple, traditional phrases so that the story can be remembered easily, for the community will sing it again and again. There was no definitely arranged pattern for him to follow, no coldly calculated effect to bring out; it was composed spontaneously, and materially affected by the temper and emotions of the crowd, which in turn, caused a vital and sudden emotion to be born in him. It is the process of improvisation, enthusiastic response, and further creation, which accounts for the spontaneity of the ballad. (1)

Just why has this simple, artless, unlearned form of verse lived through the ages, and why does it find a place in the hearts of all lovers of poetry? It has an universal appeal that finds an answering chord in human emotions, which are fundamentally the same today as they were when ballads were being made and sung. Before our eyes in the world created by ballads is enacted the splendid pageantry of English and Scottish history. Beautiful maidens, lordly fathers, brave knights, and proud nobles inhabit impossible castles, or travel through dark forests, or sail perilous seas in frail boats, or fight valiantly against great odds, until overtaken by a preordained fate and death.

(1) Kittredge - English and Scottish Ballad - introduction
XXV

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 great odds, until overtaken by a preordained fate and death.

The ballad world is full of adventure. One hero is ordered to cross a stormy sea, another steals away the loveliest bride in all the land, another is betrayed by his true love, while still another fights valiantly against great odds. There is a long line of fairies, elves, and ghosts, which inhabit the ballad world, and any or all of them are apt to appear with hardly a moment's notice.

A favorite subject of the ballad singer, and one very frequently used, is love, and as true love runs not a whit more smoothly in ballad literature than it does in any other, the lovers have a hard time. Jealous sisters, cruel brothers, stern parents, and folk from the other world frequently appear at the most unfortunate times, and pursue the lovers until we see them laid in untimely graves. Out of one grows the bonny briar, and stretches up to meet the rose that is sure to spring from the other.

Pathetic is the fate of FAIR ANNIE, FAIR JANET, and dozens of other maids who die so unhappily. Pathetic too is the fate of JONNIE ARMSTRONG, YOUNG WATERS, and CLARK CLOVEN. 'To know them is to love them and we follow them through their adventures, with breathless interest, although it is plainly indicated from the first, that death is their portion, for few and far between are the ballads that have a happy ending.

One
The belated world is full of adventures. One
here is ordered to cross a stormy sea, another steals away
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by his true love, while still another fights valiantly
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pursue the lovers until we see them laid in misty graves.
Out of one grows the honey bird, and stretches up to meet
the rose that is sure to spring from the other.
Pathetic is the fate of PAUL AND VIRGINIA, PAUL
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low them through their adventures, with breathless interest,
although it is plainly indicated from the first, that death
is their portion, for low and far between are the bellads
that have a happy ending.

Gummere declares that out of three hundred odd ballads only twenty have anything that approaches the "happy ending." (1) The death of the hero or heroine, however, does not detract from the interest. There are things more tragic than death, and a study of the emotion revealed by the makers of the ballad prove that an honorable death is not a tragedy.

Imagination, adventure, love, pathos and death. These are the strongest emotions called forth by the old ballads, and they are the underlying emotions called forth by the literature of any age. Ballad heroes are human; they were tempted and they failed, some of them. Bravely, dramatically, they paid for their failures with their lives and left with the reader a profound love and respect. The old ballads will live because they move the reader even as Sidney was moved.

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The influence of Perry's "Reliques," and the
interest which has been manifested in his
work since his death. It was carried over, and greatly in-
creased, by the publication of his "Reliques" in 1841, and
the fact that it was carried over at all of such interest
and not only of the highest but of the most valuable
character. He was carried over at all of such interest
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character.

P A R T II

While still a child he was given a copy of
Perry's "Reliques," and all day long he poured over the vol-
ume, forgetting even his dinner. He would recite these
lines whenever he could find an audience, and he would
recite them to the very end of his life.

Later on he was given a copy of the "Reliques,"
and he poured over it all day long. He would recite these
lines whenever he could find an audience, and he would
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(1) The father of James Hogg, the "Ettrick Shepherd."

II PART

The influence of Percy's "Reliques," and the interest which this publication aroused was not allowed to die with the century. It was carried over, and greatly intensified by Sir Walter Scott. As a child Scott liked nothing better than to listen to Border talks and legends that the old wives of the highlands used to relate for his entertainment. He begged to hear the old ballads sung so often that he knew them by heart.

While still a child he came upon a copy of Percy's "Reliques," and all day long he poured over the volume, forgetting even his dinner. He would recite these ballads whenever he could find an audience, and lacking an audience he would recite them to the hills, because he loved the flow of the simple verse.

Later when he had grown to manhood, he began to collect ballads. He was an indefatigable ballad hunter, walking miles over highland and lowland, into shepherd's hut or minister's manse, in short, wherever he had heard of an old clansman who could sing for him an old ballad that he needed for the book which became "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." The only criticism of the work came from an old woman who had sung many of the old ballads for the author, Sir Walter Scott, and she with blunt honesty moaned, "They were made for singing, and no for the reading; but ye ha'e broken the charm now, an' they'll never be sung mair." (1)

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(1) The mother of James Hogg, the "Rhymer of the Glen."

Scott divides his book into three sections. The first includes historic ballads - ballads that have some historic foundation. In collecting them Scott allowed for exaggeration. Of course he found names and places hopelessly mispronounced and historic events placed decades before and after their correct order. Nevertheless, wherever there were ballads with a definite background they were included.

Many of these tales were preserved by pipers who played the part of minstrel and received some measure of compensation. Scott tells us that "About springtime, and after harvest, it was the custom of these musicians (the pipers) to make a progress through a particular district of the country. Their music and their tales paid for their lodging, and they were usually gratified with a donation of seed corn." (1)

Why the gift of corn, or seed corn, it is impossible to say, for we are told that the border dweller lived a life of adventure, made up of flight and pursuit, peril and escape. He refused to plow or cultivate the soil, because he knew that to be caught breaking the truce with the English meant forfeiture of his lands, and he refused to take the chance of cultivating or planting crops for his enemy to enjoy. Border warfare was common. It was against the law to raid over the border, yet border raids were common and it was counted honorable to steal from the English.

(1) Sir Walter Scott - Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border -
page 48

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In the second part of the "Minstrelsy" we find romantic ballads, those in common use upon the borders. These tales relate marvelous adventure with the kelpies, the shellycoats and the brownies. Scotland's fairies lack the beauty and aerial loveliness of the Celtic fae and seem to run more to the demons and ugly folk. To be "carried off by the fairies" was a threat often made to naughty children.

The third division of the book is called "Modern Imitation." It was published in 1802 and is the first ballad echo heard in this century. It has been lamented that Scott not only imitated the old ballad form and used it as a means to tell his own border tale, but that he frequently supplied lines and even stanzas missing in original tales.

No one was more fitted to do just this than Sir Walter Scott. From his earliest youth he was saturated with border tradition. In his autobiography he tells us that "My grandmother, in whose youth the old Border depredations were matter of recent tradition, used to tell me many a tale of Watt of Harden, Wight Willie of Aikwood, Jamie Telfer of the fair Dodhead, and other heroes, - merry men all of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John." (1)

Certainly he was familiar with all the old ballads and made the most of them too. To Sir Walter Scott we owe the opportunity of comparing a modern ballad with one

(1) Sir Walter Scott - Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border

In the second part of the "Minstrelsy" we find romantic ballads, those in common use upon the borders. These tales relate numerous adventures with the fairies, the shapeshifters and the brownies. Scotland's fairies lack the beauty and aerial loveliness of the Celtic fairies and seem to run more to the demons and ugly folk. To be "carried off by the fairies" was a threat often made to naughty children.

The third division of the book is called "Modern Tradition." It was published in 1892 and is the first ballad ever heard in this century. It has been lamented that Scott not only imitated the old ballad form and used it as a means to tell his own border tale, but that he frequently supplied lines and even stanzas missing in original tales.

No one was more fitted to do just this than Sir Walter Scott. From his earliest youth he was surrounded with border tradition. In his autobiography he tells us that "My grandfather, in whose youth the old border traditions were matter of recent tradition, used to tell me many a tale of Waverley, the Waverley of the Waverley, the Waverley of the Waverley, and other heroes, - countrymen all of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John." (1)

Certainly he was familiar with all the old ballads and made the most of them too. To Sir Walter Scott we owe the opportunity of comparing a modern ballad with one

(1) Sir Walter Scott - Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border

of the old ones. This comparison will show the great difference between the literary composition and the spontaneous simplicity of communal creation, for Scott based his well known "Lochinvar" on the popular ballad "Katherine Jaffray:"

There lived a lass in yonder dale,
And down in yonder glen, O,
And Katharine Jaffray was her name,
Well known by many men, O.

Out came the Laird of Lauderdale,
Out frae the south Countrie,
All for to court this pretty maid,
Her bridegroom for to be.

He has telled her father and mither baith,
And a' the rest o' her kin,
And has telled the lass hersel',
And her consent has win.

Then came the Laird of Lochinton,
Out frae the English border,
All for to court this pretty maid
Well mounted in good order.

He's telled her father and mither baith,
As I hear sindry say,
But he has nae telled the lass herself,
Till on her wedding day.

When day was set, and friends were met,
And married to be
Lord Lauderdale came to the place,
The bridal for to see.

"O are you come for sport, young man?
Or are ye come for play?
Or ye come for a sight o' our bride,
Just on her wedding day?"

"I'm nouthar come for sport," he says,
"Nor am I come for play;
But if I had one sight o' your bride,
I'll mount and ride away."

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ence between the literary composition and the spontaneous
simplicity of communal expression, for Scott passed his well-
known "Lockhart" on the popular ballad "Katherine Tait."

There lived a lass in yonder glen,
And down in yonder glen,
And Katherine Tait was her name,
Well known by many men.

Out came the laird of Lumbardale,
Out from the south of Scotland,
All for to court this pretty maid,
Her bridegroom for to be.

He has told her father and mother both,
And at the east of her kin,
And has told the lass herself,
And her consent has won.

Then came the laird of Lumbardale,
Out from the English border,
All for to court this pretty maid,
Well mounted in good order.

He's told her father and mother both,
As I hear staidly say,
But he has not told the lass herself,
Till on her wedding day.

When day was set, and friends were met,
And married to be
Lord Lumbardale came to the place,
The bride for to see.

"O are you come for sport, young man?
Or are ye come for play?
Or ye come for a sight of our bride,
Just on her wedding day?"

"I'm neither come for sport," he says,
Nor am I come for play;
But if I had one sight of your bride,
I'll mount and ride away."

There was a glass of the red wine
Filled up them atween,
And aye she drank to Lauderdale,
Wha her true-love had been.

Then he took her by the milk-white hand,
And by the grass green sleeve,
And he mounted her behind him there
At the bridegroom he asked nae leave.

Then the blood run down by the Cowden Banks,
And down by Cowden Braes,
And aye she garred the trumpet sound,
"O this is foul, foul play!"

Now a' ye that in England are,
Or in England born,
Come ne'er to Scotland to court a lass
Or else ye'll get the scorn.

They haik ye up and settle ye by
Till on your wedding day
And gi' ye frogs instead o' fish
And play ye foul foul play.

The first noticeable difference is in versification. Scott discards the simple ballad meter for the anapestic couplet. He makes the elopement of the young couple the center of the narrative omitting the description of the bride given in the first stanzas of the original ballad. Then Scott draws a complete picture of the character of the hero, Lochinvar, idealizing him at the expense of the bridegroom.

"Lochinvar" is a smoother, more artistic piece of poetry than "Katharine Jaffray," but it owes its creation to the old story of border times and the feuds between the Scotch and English. Had the theme not been preserved in the old ballad, the incident would probably be

There was a glass of the red wine
Filled up there atween,
and eye she drank to Lammie's sake,
The her first-love had been.

Then he took her by the milk-white hand,
And by the green grass sleeve,
And he mounted her behind him there
At the bachelors he asked her leave.

Thus the blood ran down by the Cowden Banks,
And down by Cowden Brigs,
And eye she heard the first of sound,
"O this is foul, foul play!"

Now a' ye that in England are,
Or in England born,
Come ne'er to Scotland to court a lass
Or else ye'll get the scorn.

They hark ye up and scold ye by
Till on your wedding day
And g' ye frogs instead o' fish
And play ye foul foul play.

The first noticeable difference is in versification. Scott abandons the simple ballad meter for the anapaestic couplet. He makes the eloquent of the poem couplet is the center of the narrative omitting the description of the bride given in the first stanza of the original ballad. Then Scott draws a complete picture of the character of the hero, Lockhart, idealizing him at the expense of the bridegroom.

"Lockhart" is a smoother, more artistic piece of poetry than "Lammie's Love," but it owes its creation to the old story of border times and the feud between the Scotch and English. Had the theme not been preserved in the old ballad, the incident would probably be

forgotten and Scott might never have been inspired to write this delightful narrative or modern ballad.

Few writers have been able to catch the style and feeling of the ballad as well as Scott. Of all the modern writers of ballads he seems to have come the nearest to reproducing their startling simplicity and vital force. "Kinmont Willie" is Scott's own work and comes miraculously near being a perfect example of a modern ballad. Scott's success, however, is not to be wondered at. He was steeped in traditional ballad lore from earliest childhood. We are told that as a child he entertained the minister by reciting at the top of his lungs the ballad of "Hardyknute," but the worthy divine did not appreciate either the selection or the child's declamatory powers and exclaimed, "One may as well speak in the mouth of a cannon as where that child is!" (1)

His first money went to purchase a copy of Percy's "Reliques" and he pored over this volume which grew to be one of his most precious possessions. When he came to die those near him heard him repeat the lines from "Otterburn:"

"My wound is deep, I fain wad sleep,
Nae mair I'll fighting see;
Gae lay me in the bracken bush
That grows on yonder lee."

(1) Minstrelsy of Scottish Border

37
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"Ottemann":

"My wound is deep, I faint and sleep,
Has not I'll fighting rest;
O'er lay me in the broken earth
That grows on yonder lee."

No wonder Scott could produce something very close to the old traditional ballad. We have seen that the old ballads were a part of the life of the peasants; their tradition, their folk-lore. Scott lived among them; in fact made himself one of them; therefore, his near success follows the natural order of events and proves that the old ballads belong to tradition and he who comes nearest to reproducing them must live among the lands and the people from whom and by whom they were made.

The modern poet cannot do this. Even Scott could not get near enough to catch their truest notes. His "Bonnie Dundee", with its rollicking chorus catches the lilt of the repeated refrain, but it is modern in form and diction.

"The Gray Brothers," "Glenfinlan," "The Mac-care of Glencoe," and "Jack of Hazeldea" reflect the spirit and vital force of the old ballad, but bear unmistakably the marks of a single author and the stamp of conscious artistry.

Unlike Scott, Wordsworth made no attempt to produce traditional ballads. He wanted to write poetry in the language of the people and use for his subjects simple events and characters with whom he had daily contact. The accepted theory of poetry Wordsworth claimed was false and vicious. It had been removed as far as possible from the dialect and diction of the common people and had become artificial and stilted. Poetry was not poetry unless it was clothed in the language of the scholar and dealt with

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scholarly or literary subjects.

Back to Nature and the natural was Wordsworth's theory. He held that there was enough poetry in nature and the simple natural life of the ordinary humble peasant to inspire the poet. He tried to avoid "poetic diction" and to write naturally.

In September 1798 "Lyrical Ballads" appeared as their joint work. The greater part of the volume, however, is the work of Wordsworth (1) and is a sincere effort to capture again the spontaneous, robust simplicity of the ballad. Many of the poems are failures, because their exaggerated simplicity is as artificial as the "poetic diction" which Wordsworth decried, but some are masterpieces and catch the vigor and spontaneity of the old ballad even if they do bear the mark of conscious literary art lyricism, and at times an exaggerated degree of sentiment.

Wordsworth called the book "Lyrical Ballads," but according to the accepted definition of the terms "lyric" and "ballad" the title is a paradox. As for the poems included in the book, the greater number are, without any doubt, pure lyrics. They do, however, stand out from the literature of the age and mark a successful attempt on the part of the author to overthrow the artificial and exalt the simple.

There are a few poems in this collection which are clearly imitations of the old ballad. "We are

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Seven," "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," "The Old Cumberland Beggar," "Peter Bell," "Ruth," and "Lucy Gray" show many of the traditional ballad characteristics, yet they could never be confused with the ballads in the Child collection.

"We are Seven" tells a simple story, but along with the narrative runs the beautiful picture of the child:

"Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head."

In the next stanza:

"She had a rustic, woodland air
And she was wildly clad
Her eyes were fair, and very fair
Her beauty made me glad."

Such descriptions belong to the lyric rather than the ballad.

The philosophy that runs through the entire poem beginning with the first verse and continuing to the last is the more foreign element. The philosophy is well hidden in the naive simplicity of the child, but, nevertheless, it is there and removes this poem far from the category of a ballad for the old ballad maker never used his ballads as a vehicle to advance his philosophy of life.

The same fault is found in "The Old Cumberland Beggar." Wordsworth set out, not to tell a story with a dramatic climax, but to defend the existence of the beggar, arouse sympathy and spread a little propaganda against com-

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rather than direct imitation. "Lyric ballads" say not much
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no axe to grind, no lesson to teach, no theory to impose, and
no wish to influence his audience. Wordsworth uses the old
beggar to teach us generosity and to call upon us to count
our blessings. As a ballad it fails to qualify.

Gladstone has discovered woven into the story
of "Peter Bell" a vivid power of description and strong
touches of skill in plot arrangement. He closes with the re-
mark, "It must have cost great labour, and is an extraordina-
ry poem both as a whole and in detail." (1) This is hardly
the criticism that we expect to hear of a ballad. Much too
learned is "Peter Bell" for an ideal ballad character.

"Ruth" offers ideal ballad material but the
treatment is modern. The presence of the run-on line is the
first indication that this is not a traditional ballad. The
old ballad maker ended his thought and his verse simultaneous-
ly. The next failure to meet the true ballad test lies in
the speed, or rather lack of speed, in the narrative. Fig-
ures of speech, descriptions, and character analysis delay the
action of the narrative. Careful transition and elaboration
keep this poem from being a successful imitation of the old
ballad.

There is sufficient evidence, however, to
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(1) Wordsworth's Complete Works - Cambridge Edition - page 831
(notes)

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(1) Wordsworth's Complete Works - Cambridge Edition - page 821
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rather than close imitation. "Lyrical Ballads" may not seem such a contradiction if we apply the word "ballad" to the subject matter rather than to the treatment or versification. The story of "Ruth" is clearly a story of desertion, one of the most common traditional ballad subjects, but here any possible comparison between the two has its end as well as its beginning.

There are two other poems in the book that may be singled out from the majority as poems bearing some relation to the old ballads. They come closer, each in its own way, to the roughness of verses and simplicity of subject matter of the original ballads than some of the poems already mentioned. The first is "The Idiot Boy" and the second "Lucy Gray."

"The Idiot Boy" is not great poetry. Its versification is as rough as that of the old ballad and it needs all the power of the spoken word to make it slide smoothly in many places. It received severe criticism from the critics of the day who were looking for something more uplifting and splendid from the pen of their poets than the story of an idiot boy. (1) There is nothing beautiful in this poem, but it remains an outstanding poem in this collection because it is the one imitation of a ballad that falls far below the old ballads in literary worth. It is neither a good lyric nor a worthy imitation of the old form.

(1) William Hazlitt essay "On Living Poets"

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"Lucy Gray" or "Solitude" is the nearest Wordsworth ever came to imitating the simple, concise, direct style of the ballad. If he had plunged directly into the story he might have made a more successful beginning. As it is, it takes him three stanzas to start the story and he introduces the personal pronoun in the first line.

In the fourth and fifth stanzas he sweeps away the illusion that he has so carefully built up in the preceding stanzas.

The characters which are pictured as simple and solitary begin to speak. The father in careful diction says:

"You to the town must go

And take the lantern, Child, to light

Your mother through the snow."

The child answers just as poetically:

"That father will I gladly do

'Tis scarcely afternoon - "

We ^{not} are told how or when the mother returned but we come upon the parents both searching in vain for the lost child, and we are left with the eerie feeling of the supernatural.

The whole, with the exception of the poor start, is close to the old ballad form. It is short, the narrative moves with some degree of speed, the climax is abrupt and the ending more or less indefinite and in tune with the old beliefs and superstitions that mark so many of Child's ballads.

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man's ballads.

One of Coleridge's poems in the Literary Ballads calls for our attention, namely, "The Ancient Mariner." As a poem it succeeds in making the unreal seem real. Considered as an imitation of the ballad, it is very long, and contains elements that have no place in the traditional ballad. The length is not objectionable, because the events which make the narrative are many, and not one could be omitted without spoiling the story. The elements introduced by the author, and which reflect his personality, are neither out of place nor unpoetic, but they indicate that this is a poem of literary merit, and not a successful imitation of an old ballad.

The poem is divided into seven parts, each part containing a definite movement in the action of the poem. The action of the narrative moves definitely and swiftly to the climax. The first movement is complete in part one, and the second in part two. The closing stanza of part three marks the climax of the action and plunges the reader deep in the realm of the supernatural.

From this point, to the close of the narrative, the impossible seems to become the possible, and the reader moves in a supernatural world utterly lost to reality. He feels himself to be the wedding guest held in the spell of the old mariner's narrative.

It is interesting to note the use of the five and six line stanzas. Most of the stanzas in the poem (in the poem) consist of four lines in the regular ballad meter.

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Occasionally a stanza occurs to which a fifth line is added as a refrain, and more frequently an added couplet is found. This is the nearest approach to incremental repetition found in the modern ballad. In part two, the fourth verse seems to move forward aided by the repetition of a line with a change in the tense of the verb:

"Then all averred, I had killed the bird.
That brought the fog and mist;
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay
That bring the fog and mist."

The last four stanzas introduce an element never found in the old ballads. They contain beautiful lines, familiar to everyone, but they are not connected with the action of the narrative:

"Farewell, farewell, but this I tell
To thee, thou wedding-guest!
He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all."

Although the mariner utters the words most appropriately it is a piece of philosophy tucked in by Coleridge. The old ballad maker omitted all philosophical conclusions; he simply told the story and left the rest to the reader.

Coleridge has written a fine poem with many of the elements that are found in oldest ballads, but it is a poem and not a ballad.

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"Farewell, farewell, but this I tell
To thee, thou wedding-maid!
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If additional facts were needed to prove that the ballad is a vital form of poetry appealing to school-

ars of all ages, no more significant fact could be noted than the number and various natures of the poets on whom the ballad has made so lasting an impression that they have been compelled to try to reproduce it.

It is not surprising to find the ballad among the poems of John Keats for he writes, "A poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence, because he has no identity; he is continually in for, and filling another body." (1)

"When we read his verse," says Arthur Symons (2) referring to Keats, "we think of the verse, not of John Keats."

His rather fine contribution takes the form of a beautiful modern ballad which has, however, many of the characteristics of the traditional.

"La Belle Dame Sans Merci" is modern in versification and smooth and polished in meter. In the original version Keats makes some attempt to imitate word and phrase typical of ballad diction. In place of a refrain the fourth line has been shortened in each stanza so that it lacks one foot. We have:

"Ah what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering;
The sedge is wither'd from the lake
And no birds sing."

(1) Arthur Symons - The Romantic Movement in English Poetry -
Page 306

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Page 306

and of all ages, no more significant fact could be noted than the number and various nature of the poets on whom the belief has made so lasting an impression that they have been compelled to try to reproduce it.

It is not surprising to find the belief among the poems of John Keats for he writes, "A poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence, because he has no identity; he is continually in two, and filling another body." (1)

"When we read his verse," says Arthur Symonds (2) referring to Keats, "we think of the verse, not of John Keats."

His rather fine contribution takes the form of a beautiful modern belief which has, however, many of the characteristics of the traditional.

"La Belle Dame Sans Merci" is modern in versification and smooth and polished in meter. In the original version Keats makes some attempt to imitate word and phrase typical of ballad diction. In place of a refrain the fourth line has been shortened in each stanza so that it lacks one foot. We have:

"As what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely following;
The hedge is white'd from the lake
And no birds sing."

(1) Arthur Symonds - The Romantic Movement in English Poetry - Page 303

(2) Arthur Symonds - The Romantic Movement in English Poetry - Page 303

A decidedly modern touch is the title. It contrasts strangely with the supernatural note of the entire poem, so typically characteristic of the ballad. An interesting comparison can be made with Child's "Thomas Rhymer" (1.)

In "Thomas Rhymer" we read:

"True Thomas lay o'er yon grassy bank
And he beheld a ladie gay
A ladie that was brisk and bold
Come riding o'er the fernie brae."

Keat's hero says:

"I met a lady in the meads
Full beautiful, a faery 'child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild."

The reference to the "faery" world and the beautiful maid takes us to the world of the supernatural and soon we are brought face to face with the old superstition that, once food is accepted and eaten, the spell is complete:

"She found me roots of relish sweet,
And Honey wild and manna dew;
And sure in language strange she said
'I love thee true.'"

The Queen fed Thomas bread and wine and showed him "fairlies three." Keats shows a delicate, artistic touch, by referring, not to mortal food, but "roots," manna dew," and "wild honey." The delicate fairy touch is carried into each little detail. Traditional bards were not so artistic in detail. They sketched with bolder strokes.

Both ballads deal in numbers; Keats uses the phrase "with kisses four," while the old ballad designates

(1) Child - No. 37

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"fairlies three." The old ballad has Thomas disappear for seven years but Keats finishes with the touch of the skilled artist:

"And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing."

The poem is simple and beautifully artistic, but not a traditional ballad, although it employs several devices and imitates many of the traditional characteristics. The touch is too delicate, the artist too sure, the work of a master too evident, to call it even a good imitation. The copy is again much finer and more literary than the original.

Alfred Lord Tennyson was master of a variety of verse forms and his subjects were many. His poetry possesses a peculiar sweetness and charm. His special field was not narrative poetry, yet even he could not escape the lure of the ballad.

"Rizpah" is an interesting tale told in old ballad style, picturing in an objective way the love that always exists between a mother and her child. It is interesting to find this ballad among Tennyson's poems because the effect produced is such a decided contrast to Tennyson's lyric sweetness. The subject is indeed ballad material, one that an old ballad singer might have chosen. It is presented with all the pathos and calls forth all the pity that an old ballad might evoke, but even this stark horror bears the ar-

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skilled artist:

"And this is why I journey here
Alone and palely lathering
Though the sedge is whiter'd from the lake,
And no birds sing."

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with all the pathos and calls forth all the pity that an old

ballad might evoke, but even this stark horror bears the ar-

tistic touch, and we are given first an artistic setting:

"Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind
over land and sea

And Willie's voice in the wind, 'O mother
come out to me!"

Why should he call me tonight, when he
knows that I cannot go?

For the downs are as bright as day, and
the full moon stares at
the snow."

Again and again the directness of the narrative is interrupted to insert some bit of philosophy which Tennyson puts into the words of the mother. This, of course, could never happen in an old ballad, for nothing interferes with the simple directness of the story. The reader must gather details, even the barest details for himself. (1)

"The Revenge" or "A Ballad of the Fleet" is a more successful narrative. Meter and stanza are irregular but there is an underlying fire of patriotism and enthusiasm that is as marked as that of the ancient ballads. Here is Tennyson, the patriot, close to reality. There is no elaborate setting. We are told:

"At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnacle, like a flutter'd bird came flying
from far away:
'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-
three!'

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"Dated Barcelona" which treats the same subject.

Then swore Lord Thomas Howard: 'Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of
gear,
And half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-
three?' "

Thus in seven lines Grenville states his case, and the next five give another view, with hardly a word wasted. Yet the poem is long. It lacks the speedy action of the old ballads, as well as the simplicity of diction, verse and meter.

The chief aim of William Morris was to reproduce the art and literature of the middle ages. He was one of the leading figures among the Romantics and identified himself with the Pre-Raphaelites. Nothing modern seemed to interest him. His one aim and object seemed to be to revive some art of the past.

With this tendency it is not strange that we find a number of brief, stirring, forceful ballads giving brief pictures like sudden glimpses caught during a flash of lightning; a knight riding through a flooded country in order to take a castle by surprise; a woman driven to madness by the murder of her lover; a woman at the stake about to be burned alive, when the sound of her lover's horse is heard as he gallops to her rescue; the capture of a robber and his vain pleading for life.

In the ballad "The Haystack in the Floods," we are not told how tragedy began, nor how it ended. The quick transition that marks the ballad is here employed, but the result is not as artistic as when the same device was

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used by the old ballad singers:

"Had she come all the way for this
To part at last without a kiss?
Yea, had she borne the dirt and rain
That her own eyes might see him slain
Beside the haystack in the floods?"

The heroine is hardly that of the old ballads. She thinks and does the most peculiar things. First she begs her lover not to fight and the simple reason is, that if he fights and is killed, she will have to go back alone. Ballad heroines were not selfish.

"But, 'O' she said
'My God! my God! I have to tread
The long way back without you; then
The court at Paris; those six men;
The gratings of the Chatelet';"

And when the battle is hottest she totters from her horse, chooses a nice damp spot "a wet heap of hay" to be exact, and sleeps. Her slumber we are told, was dreamless. Somehow, I hardly think Morris was true to his heroines of the Middle Ages. He leaves us here telling us nothing of the fate of the woman. There is a suggestion that she may have become mad. This is the happiest ending for which one can hope.

Morris imitated the abrupt beginning and the scarcity of detail of the ancient ballad, but unfortu-

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nately something was overlooked, or left out, and the device is not successfully used by Morris in this poem.

In the poetry of Morris it is hard to draw a line which will separate the ballad from the dramatic narrative. As a student and lover of the middle ages he borrows much from them. His characters are pictured for us just as they are undergoing some terrible experience, and he plunges directly into the story. True the old ballads did the same thing, but the narratives of Morris lack the simplicity of the ballad narrative and we are continually asking questions to which we can find no answer.

"The Little Tower" has neither beginning nor end and leaves us asking why the brutal treatment of the enemy. The same is true of "Shameful Death." The poem begins after Sir Hugh has been cut down from the gallows-tree where he has suffered at the hands of some enemy who is unknown to the reader. His mother, wife and brother and the good priest are gathered around the bedside of the dying man, as the story opens, but Sir Hugh is so far gone that nothing can save him. "Who," we ask, "was responsible for the hanging of Sir Hugh, and why should such a punishment be meted out to him? Did he deserve it?" Morris does not answer any of our questions.

The traditional ballad maker might have started the story just as abruptly, but before he had finished, we would have gained a complete picture of the whole

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cause and result, with a very good character sketch of Sir Hugh. As Morris tells the story, we have no great love for Sir Hugh. His enemies are not ours. We are sorry for him but with reservations. We do not know him, because we do not know whether his enemies were justified or not.

Morris employs the abrupt beginning and the scarcity of detail, as did the old bards, but he lacks the dexterity of the unconscious artist who seemed to know just how much was necessary for a complete understanding between singer and audience.

"The Gilliflower of Gold" and "The Eve of Crecy" both borrow the refrain from the ballad but it gives, not the idea of the refrain of the old English popular ballad, but the refrain of the literary ballad, patterned on the more exact form of the French Ballade. Certainly the refrain removes all naturalness and shows the attempt to embroider and decorate.

Morris tried to catch the spirit of the middle ages and to picture it in his poetry. It is a sincere effort and he has succeeded to a remarkable degree. He has caught all the abruptness, all the brutality, but has lost a certain influence that softens. We are never offended, never made to feel the brutal force of life in Child's ballads, but it stares in all its starkness from almost every line of Morris.

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the ballad is, of course, impossible for us to state with any degree of certainty. There are certain factors in his life that may throw some light upon the subject. First, in everything that he did he showed a great passion and love for the art of the middle ages. Much of his writing imitates the style, language and plan of Chaucer. He delved into the romances and Scandinavian folk-lore and translated Homer and Virgil.

The efforts and research of Morris were not confined to the literature of the middle ages. He built a factory and reproduced successfully much of the art of the same period. Hangings, tapestries, and household furniture were designed and manufactured by Morris until he had completely changed the prevailing style of household decoration.

He believed that early Italian printers had produced a more artistic work than modern printers; therefore, he founded a press and imitated the artistic work of the Venetian printers. In short, his whole life was filled with a love and a desire to reproduce the literature and art of an earlier age.

We have seen how Sir Walter Scott roamed the hills of Scotland and gleaned every remnant of border history and literature until it became a part of his very nature, and he could almost place himself in the character of the border chieftan or bandit. So was it with Morris. He studied the life and the art of the rough, ignorant,

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half-savage characters of the middle ages until their ideals, their appreciation of the artistic and their way of expressing it became, to a certain extent, a part of him.

His success in reproducing furniture and decorations seems to be more definite, more complete than his success in reproducing the ballad although to a very great extent his success is marked. His over emphasis on the abruptness, and the indefinite conclusion as well as his over emphasis on the savage cruelty and selfishness of his characters make us wish that he had found the saving grace of humor, pathos, and love that mark the traditional ballad.

Like Morris, Rossetti lived in a vanished past. He reflects nothing of the age in which he lived, but he cannot help reflecting some of the superstitions and the passion of his race. Rossetti was an Italian by birth and this fact, perhaps, helps to account for one of the strangest, most peculiar ballads written by any poet of the nineteenth century. It has many of the characteristics of the English ballad, but the exaggerated superstition and the actual form are so different that the ballad "Sister Helen" occupies a place of its own.

The story is told by means of a conversation between a sister and her little brother. The refrain is repeated over and over filling at once the place of the refrain of the old ballad and furthering the action as did incremental repetition. The refrain itself is the secret

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thought of the sister. It is not said to the brother for he is too young to understand the dreadful meaning behind it all. He simply acts as messenger. It is too artistic to be classed as traditional or an imitation of the traditional. The action is swift - too artistically swift, and too filled with superstition and witchcraft to picture the traditional folklore of any northern race. Unlike the old ballads the treatment is subjective rather than objective and the mixture of witchcraft and religion marks it distinctly non-celtic. In our English ballads and folk-lore the mention of the phrase "Mary mother Mary," would instantly break the spell of witchcraft and banish evil.

In "Troy Town," the artist, Rossetti, shows what he can do with the refrain. It is a peculiar subject treated in a strange mystical way. It tells us a story only in the closing stanza. The outstanding ballad characteristic is the refrain, which is both single and double. This is a piece of patterned literary art rather than a simple ballad.

"The White Ship" is Rossetti's most successful attempt to imitate the traditional ballad. The story is told by the butcher, Berold. It is told simply, but is obviously the work of a modern poet. The first noticeable departure is the subjective quality. As the butcher faces death he tells how a drowning man feels; he seeks to review his feelings and at the same time continues the nar-

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rative. The old ballads were entirely objective.

The refrain is not in keeping with the traditional ballad refrain, for it seeks to impose a truth:

"Lands are swayed by a king or a throne
The sea has no king but God alone."

This is, of course, enough to mark the poem as the work of a modern author. The narrative is well told and contains much in a few stanzas, but Rossetti insists upon teaching that nobility and the lowest tradesman, a butcher, are both ranked simply as men when death seems inevitable. To clinch the lesson comes the refrain.

Rossetti's longest ballad is "Rose May." Its length keeps us from giving it any consideration as an imitation of a traditional ballad. As it now stands it is divided into three parts, each part a complete poem in itself. It is the superstition of the crystal gazer of the middle ages, a false lover and a betrayed maiden.

The material is typically ballad material, and had it been given to an ancient bard our narrative would have been swift and sure with all the elements that make a ballad one of the masterpieces of natural beauty and artistry.

Rossetti has produced a piece of work with all the charm of Tennyson, and all the mystic superstition of Coleridge, and has, in character portrayal caught the flavor of ballad simplicity. "Rose May" is very

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human. Rossetti has succeeded in making her live.

Of the four ballads mentioned, "The White Ship" comes nearest to imitating the traditional. It has all the faults of conscious artistry, but the selection of a simple, ignorant peasant as narrator of the tragedy helps to keep us close to the old ballad form - the simple tale of a simple people.

Just as Sir Walter Scott was raised on the traditions and life of the border, so Rudyard Kipling became familiar with the life of the English Tommy. Tommy's language became his. The common soldier is rough and coarse. Kipling made Tommy's ballads ring true. The life of the soldier and sailor is filled with a merciless reality. Kipling reproduces it faithfully in his verse. Tommy at home, realizes that:

"Oh it's Tommy this an' Tommy that, an' Tommy go away;

But It's 'Thank you, Mister Atkins,' when the band
begins to play."

Musical refrain and rhythmical repetition are a part of all Kipling's verse as well as dramatic events and unequalled climax. The ballad of "Fisher's Boarding House" is modern tragedy brought to a dramatic climax with the death of Hans, the Dane. True it lacks the glamor of tradition, and instead of a noble knight we are dealing with a common sailor. Yet he has some of the qualities of a true knight, and our sympathies are aroused because his life is forfeited because of his loyalty to his principle.

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But it's 'Thank you, Mister Atkins,' when the band

begins to play."

Emotional rhythm and rhetorical repetition are a part of all Kipling's verse as well as dramatic events and unqualified climax. The ballad of "Walter's Boarding House" is modern tragedy brought to a dramatic climax with the death of Hans, the Dane. True it lacks the glamour of tradition, and instead of a noble knight we are dealing with a common sailor. Yet he has some of the qualities of a true knight, and our sympathies are aroused because his life is forfeited because of his loyalty to his principle.

The lady mentioned is by birth and breeding quite a contrast to the lady of traditional times, yet her conduct is comparable to the ladies who have some connection with the world of the supernatural.

"Danny Deever" with its repeated refrain of "For they're hanging Danny Deever in the Morning," has the power to stir equal to any martial music. In fact, it is music and regulated too; for who does not realize the change in tempo when the lines reach the place:

"For they're done with Danny Deever"?

"Gunga Din," "Fuzzy-Wuzzy," "Mandalay," "A Ballad of the King's Mercy," are excellent examples of Modern balladry. Louis Untermeyer calls Kipling "A people's ballad-est" and states that "he has composed a dozen songs which are popular classics of today and the folk-tune of tomorrow."

Kipling's finest ballad, however, "The Ballad of East and West," is a stirring narrative, and keeps very close to the ballad pattern. Omit the first four lines and the hero appears, just as the ancient ballad maker might have introduced him:

"Kamal is out with twenty men
to raise the Borderside."

With a little imagination it might be the Scottish border, but before long we come again to the poet's own conclusion, tucked in first and last so that no one can miss it. True, it belongs to the poem, but the need, the necessity of having it there re-

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PART III

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of nothing. To quote Gummere, "It is time to sum up the case for ballads as a definite, if closed account of our literature." (1) And again, "Their deepest value is that they revive to some extent the impression which primitive and communal poetry could make by means impossible for any poet to command." (2)

We have seen that poets from Wordsworth to Kipling were interested in the old ballads, interested enough to try to capture their simplicity, force, direct and unadorned style. We have noted how near to success some have come and how very far away others have remained. What is there so elusive about this form of poetry? Its subject, we have found to be universal in scope; its treatment simple, concrete and concise. The main difficulty seems to lie in its objectivity and its unconscious art.

Modern poets are subjective rather than objective. The trend and style of poetry is toward the subjective. Wordsworth states that "Poetry is the imaginative expression of strong feeling, usually rhythmical - the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, recollected in tranquillity."

The old ballad makers had no time to "reflect in tranquillity." It was "a spontaneous overflow,"

(1) Gummere - The Popular Ballad - page 337

(2) Gummere - The Popular Ballad - page 340

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or nothing. The old ballad maker did not regard the ballad as his; he simply sang the lines as they came to him. No feeling of self, no conscious or personal effort entered into their creation. Once the fever of creation passed, it was impossible for him to gather his verses and claim them as his work, for they were gone and lived only as a memory in the minds of the people for whom they were created.

This is not strange, for the vital force behind the old ballads is their relation to the life and the community which surrounded them. The poet reflects the feeling of the age. It is impossible to produce good poetry that will live, without sincerity. Nineteenth century poets could not hope to escape the reflection of the civilization with which they were surrounded. They could not help the tendency to apply the rules of the various schools of art and literature, nor could they ignore the influence of the great public ready to criticize, to praise or to condemn their work. The ballad makers' audience held no such standards for their bards; therefore, their poets were neither self conscious nor art conscious.

In spite of the surroundings, in spite of the critics, something definite was gained from the imitation of old ballads. The nineteenth century was an age of science and progress. The attempted return of the poet to the simple unscientific treatment of his subject showed by its

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startling contrast to other forms of contemporary poetry how very artificial and art-bound the poetry of the age had become. Wordsworth felt it, and although his ballads are far from capturing the note sounded by the old ballads, yet his efforts were not wasted. Coleridge produced a masterpiece when he tried to imitate the old ballad. Morris and Rossetti have given us delightful tales of the middle ages in modern ballad form, which combines the force of the stirring narrative with a more pleasing smoothness of versification. Were it not for the ballad these poets might never have been inspired, and the world might never have seen these poets in this attractive light.

Scott and Kipling show most clearly the ballad as the main source of their inspiration. They have come nearer to capturing the lost art of balladry than any of the poets. The reason stands out clearly. Material similar to that found in the ballads was a part of the life of which they sang. Scott's heroes were close to him; Kipling's Tommy was a genuine article. Had Scott and Kipling been surrounded by a lesser civilization perhaps they might have produced genuine traditional ballads.

Their efforts and the efforts of their contemporaries prove that ballads can never again be created in their original forceful simplicity of story and style, but we know that they take their place as a definite achievement in the annals of literary art, and they will

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continue to live in the history of English literature. As long as our literature continues to thrive, so long will the influence of the ballad be felt and its simple unadorned style will ever prove an inspiration for the ages to come. Although it cannot be successfully imitated it has the power to influence the style of the modern poet, and the power to show him the beauty and force of simplicity.

The modern poet is self-conscious. His art represents his life work. He realizes that his poems are all that he will leave of his personality, his teachings to a generation to come. He wants his poems to live; to be representative of the best that is in him, for he knows that by them he will be measured and his contributions to art and literature judged.

The ancient ballad maker was free from this for aside from the fact that it never occurred to him, there was no standard of art nor of literature to make him art conscious. His only critic was his audience and they either liked his offering or promptly changed it into a version of which they approved. When education comes into a community it sets up a standard, and that standard makes all artists self-conscious and art-conscious.

The effect of the ballad on nineteenth century poetry is marked. In every case where the poet consciously tried to imitate the old ballad, either in style or subject matter, something definite was accomplished.

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sciously failed to imitate the old ballad, either in style or
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Nineteenth century poets found that civilization, education, culture, schools of art, and the effect of literary criticism and critics, consciously or unconsciously affected their writings. They might choose a subject that had all the flavor of the middle ages and they might resolve to follow in every detail the style, versification, and characteristics of the old ballads, but something alien, something of the world by which they were surrounded was sure to creep in.

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Because the word "fiction" is one of the latest
and latest in literary nomenclature it has been applied to
every form of song, dance, fable or story narrative in the
field of literature.

No one can deny the importance of the vol-
ume, or deny that it is a valuable addition to the
literary world, but it is not a work of fiction.
S U M M A R Y

There are two points which the author
claims the student of literature should be aware of. The
first is that the author of this volume is not a fiction-
writer, but a student of literature who has tried to
regular literature as it is written for the people. The second point
is that the volume is a collection of stories, and the au-
thor is responsible for the selection of the material which
has been placed in it. The author has tried to select
only the best of the best, and has tried to select
single authors, giving the student a chance to
study the work of one writer, and to see the
development of his style and his thought. The author
has tried to select the best of the best, and has
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SUMMARY

Because the word Ballad is one of the loosest terms in literary nomenclature it has been applied to every form of song, dance, fable or short narrative in the field of literature.

No one can deny the existence of the ballad, or deny that it is an accepted literary form of unquestioned merit, but when authorities are questioned concerning its origin and authorship, controversy begins.

There are two popular theories. The first claims the minstrel or bard as the author of the ballad, and gives to him the credit of creating and keeping this form of popular literature alive through the ages. The second theory is that the ballad is of communal authorship, and no one person is responsible for any of the traditional ballads that have come down to us from generations past. Both theories have been proved unsound, and a middle ground, accepting a single author, plus the influence of background, history and age, with the shaping and polishing of the continued repetition of an unlettered and homogeneous community, has come to be accepted belief of scholars in this field.

With the invasion of the Normans came a new language, out of which grew a new literature which replaced the old ballads. They apparently existed as songs of the people, and in the fifteenth century proved popular among the folk. They had, however, no recognized place in literature until the revival of Percy in 1765.

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After the revival, the ballads became a popular literary form employed by the great poets of the century with more or less success. Scott like Percy searched for the original existing forms of the ballad. Later he created his own, patterned on the original forms, but modern in diction and style.

An examination of the ballads of Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Tennyson, Morris, Rossetti and Kipling prove that it is impossible for the modern poet to recreate the ballad in its original form, and that the influence of the ballad on the poetry of the nineteenth century is inspirational only.

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An examination of the ballads of Scott,

Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Tennyson, Browne, Rossetti
and others prove that it is impossible for the modern poet
to recreate the ballad in its original form, and that the
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